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COMMERCIAL LPG CYLINDER PRICE SLASHED BY ₹171.50 PER UNIT

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Monday cut the price of commercial LPG, used by business entities like restaurants, for 2nd straight month

RATE REDUCTION AFTER STEEP HIKE IN MARCH

After the latest price cut, a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder will now cost ₹1,856.5 in Delhi. This is the second straight reduction in commercial gas prices. Prices were cut by ₹91.50 for a 19-kg cylinder on April 1. The two back-to-back reductions, however, have not neutralised the ₹350.50 hike effected on March 1. The price cuts come ahead of the Karnataka Assembly elections

AVIATION FUEL RATES ALSO REDUCED

- However, domestic LPG prices have remained unchanged at ₹1,103 per 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi. The last time domestic LPG rates were changed was on March 1, when they were increased by ₹50 per cylinder
- Separately, ATF price was cut 2.45% in line with global trends. Jet fuel rates were reduced ₹2,414.25 per kilolitre to ₹95,935.34/kl in Delhi

$79.62

PER-BARREL BRENT OIL PRICES ON MONDAY, DOWN FROM A PEAK OF $88 ON APRIL 2

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GST MOP-UP AT ALL-TIME HIGH OF ₹1.87L CR IN APRIL

Record collections on the back of a robust economy, compliances

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

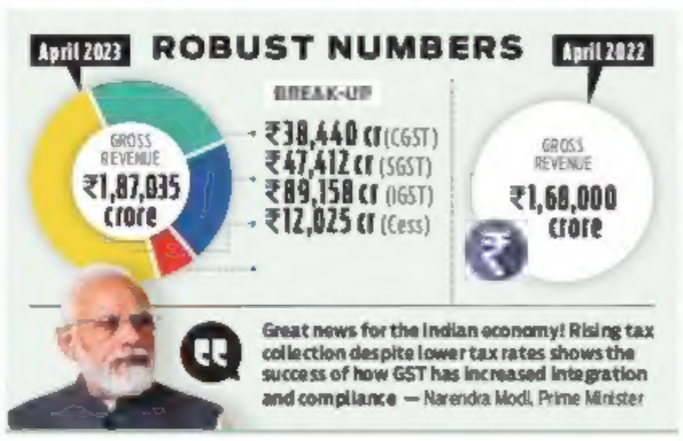
BREAKING all previous collection records, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) mopped up an impressive ₹1.87 lakh crore in April, showing robustness of the country's economy and improving compliance under the indirect tax regime.

This is the first time since the implementation of the indirect tax regime in 2018 that the figure crossed the ₹1.75 lakh crore-mark.

The April collections registered a 12% year-on-year growth. Sequentially, it grew more than 14% as the monthly collections stood at ₹1.60 lakh crore in March.

Analysts say the high number could be partly attributed to the closing of FY23. M S Mani, partner with Deloitte India, said the record mop-up relates to the transactions in March, the closing month of FY23, where all organisations would have been keen to close the fiscal year on a high note.

He points out that the April figure comes after back-to-back collections of over ₹1.4 lakh crore in FY23, and hence it is a testimony to the robust economic growth and the government's enhanced efforts aimed at improving compliance.


ROBUST NUMBERS
April 2023
GROSS REVENUE
₹1,87,035 crore
BREAK-UP
₹38,440 cr (CGST)
₹47,412 cr (SGST)
₹89,158 cr (IGST)
₹12,025 cr (Cess)
April 2022
GROSS REVENUE
₹1,68,000 crore
Great news for the Indian economy! Rising tax collection despite lower tax rates shows the success of how GST has increased integration and compliance — Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Most of the large states have reported over 20% growth in GST collection over the same period last year, indicating a broad level growth across sectors and states.

Madhya Pradesh recorded a 28% jump in GST collection, followed by Karnataka at 23%, Haryana 22%, and Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra at 21% each.

Abhishek Jain, partner and national head (indirect tax) at KPMG in India, said: "The highest ever GST collection is aligned to expectations, specifically with the increased e-way bills generated during March and reconciliations linked to year-end activities. With continued growth in collections and the government's bid to control evasion, the cheer for increased collections could continue."

Total number of e-way bills generated in the month of March 2023 was nine crore, which is 11% higher than 8.1 crore e-way bills generated in the month of February 2023.

Karnataka nets record GST of ₹14,593 crore

BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA's GST collection has touched Rs 14,593 crore, which is a record.

Although technically, Karnataka is now second only to Maharashtra (Rs 33,196 crore), experts say Karnataka has again beaten Gujarat (Rs 11,721) to third place and Tamil Nadu (Rs 11,559 crore) to fourth place.

The erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh is fifth with a collection at Rs 9949 crore -Telangana Rs 5622 and Andhra Pradesh Rs 4329.

Karnataka's achievement was lauded by CM Bommai before the announcement of the Model Code of Conduct.

FKCCI's GST committee chairman BT Manohar said, "There has been a remarkable improvement in economic activities and domestic consumption. Import of goods and service and rate of compliance have also improved sharply. The generation of e-way bills and e-invoices have improved and this helped Karnataka collect more GST."

Sources said the GST collections have improved due to the new strategies of the state commercial tax officials. However, the officials refused to comment in view of the Model Code of Conduct.

THE SIX As

Top promises - 6As - Anna (rice), Abhaya (Safety), Akshara (Education), Aarogya (Health), Abhivruddhi (Development) and Aadaaya (Economy)

Anna (Food)
- 3 free cooking gas cylinders to BPL families annually
- Atal Aahara Kendra at every ward to provide affordable and quality meals
- Under Poshane scheme, half litre Nandini milk every day to BPL families

Abhaya (Safety)
- Implement Uniform Civil Code (UCC)
- Distribute 10 lakh housing sites to homeless benificiaries
- A matching deposit of ₹10,000 for SC/ST women on five years fixed deposit
- Assured to improve ease of living of apartment dwellers

Akshara (Education)
- Holistic upgradation of government schools
- Collaborations of SMEs and ITIs for employment
- Financial incenstives for students taking competative exams

Aarogya (Health)
- Karnataka Clinics equipped with diagnostic facilities. Annual free master health check up for senior citizens

Abhivruddhi (Devpt)
- Develop BTuru for the next gen
- Transform K'taka into a premier hub of electric vehicles, convert BMTC buses into EV buses
- ₹30,000 Cr Agri fund will be set up for establishing micro cold storage facilities and processing units in all GPs

Aadaaya (Economy)
- ₹1,500 cr to develop tourist destination across the state
- Generating 10 lakh manufacturing jobs Beyond Bengaluru

UCC, NRC if voted to power in K'taka: BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

BJP national president JP Nadda releases the party's poll manifesto in Bengaluru on Monday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

IMPLEMENTATION of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) finds mention among the top promises of the ruling BJP in Karnataka in its election manifesto released here on Monday.

If BJP wins the polls and implements the UCC, it will be among the first states to do so besides Uttarakhand, which is also in the process to do the same. The party has promised to introduce the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Karnataka and ensure speedy deportation of illegal immigrants from Karnataka, besides creating 'Karnataka State Wing against Religious Fundamentalism and Terror (K-SWIFT)'.

Three free gas cylinders for Ugadi, Ganesha Chathurti and Deepavali festivals have been promised. Besides, half-litre Nandini milk for each Below Poverty Line (BPL) cardholder has been promised. This is aimed at countering the allegation of Congress and JDS against BJP of attempting to merge KMF with AMUL, as what was understood to be recently said by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

The manifesto states that the UCC will be implemented "based on the recommendations of a high-level committee to be constituted for the purpose".

BJP national president JP Nadda said, "The Constitution allows us to move in the direction of Uniform Civil Code. 'Justice to all; appeasement to none' is our policy."

The BJP said it will launch 'Onake Obavva Samajika Nyaya Nidhi' through which it will provide a matching grant of up to Rs 10,000 on five-year fixed deposits made under the scheme for SC/ST women. P4

KHARGE QUESTIONS BJP'S UCC PROMISE

Referring to the BJP's poll promise of a Uniform Civil Code, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged, "The BJP's manifesto promises to implement the UCC, aimed at breaking the country. It is only for polarisation in favour of the saffron party." P4

Irretrievable breakdown ground for divorce: SC

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Monday introduced irretrievable breakdown of marriage as a ground for divorce, ruling it has the right to invoke its special powers under Article 142 of the Constitution if it is convinced that a marriage is totally unworkable, emotionally dead and beyond salvation.

Emphasising that seeking divorce on this ground is not a matter of right, a five-judge bench of justices S K Kaul, Sanjiv Khanna, A S Oka, Vikram Nath and J K Maheshwari said the period of separation should be sufficiently long — anything above six years — before it can be considered.

The 62-page verdict authored by Justice Khanna said it would also have to consider other factors such as the time of last cohabitation, nature of allegations made by parties against each other and family members, orders passed in the legal proceedings from time to time, cumulative impact on the personal relationship and attempts made for settling disputes by court's intervention.

Dispensing with the mandatory waiting period of 6-18 months for divorce through mutual consent, the court while underscoring the legislative intent behind the time gap said waiver can be granted if the SC is satisfied that the marriage is beyond repair and if certain conditions are met (see box).

CONTINUED ON: P8

WAIVER PROCEDURE

Factors to be kept in mind before waiving statutory period under Section 13-B(2) of Hindu Marriage Act

1. Statutory period of 6 months specified in 13-B(2) and one year in 13-B(1) of separation of parties is already over before the first motion
2. All efforts for mediation/conciliation etc., to reunite the parties failed and there is no likelihood of success in that direction any longer
3. The parties have genuinely settled differences including alimony, custody of child or any other pending issues
4. Waiting period will only prolong their agony
5. Waiver application can be filed one week after first motion. Waiver will be at court's discretion

Sedition law at advanced stage of review: Govt

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

THE Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that consultations for re-examining provisions of the sedition law are at a substantially advanced stage with all stakeholders.

Attorney General R Venkataramani urged a bench headed by CJI DY Chandrachud to post further hearings on a batch of petitions challenging Section 124A of the IPC after the monsoon session of Parliament. It was posted to the second week of August. Though senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan wanted to list the pleas before a seven-judge bench, the court indicated it would have to be placed before a five-judge bench first.

On October 31, 2022, the Attorney General had told a bench led by former CJI U U Lalit that something could happen on the sedition law in the winter session of Parliament. He drew the court's attention to the government considering new draft bills for IPC and CrPC in Parliament.

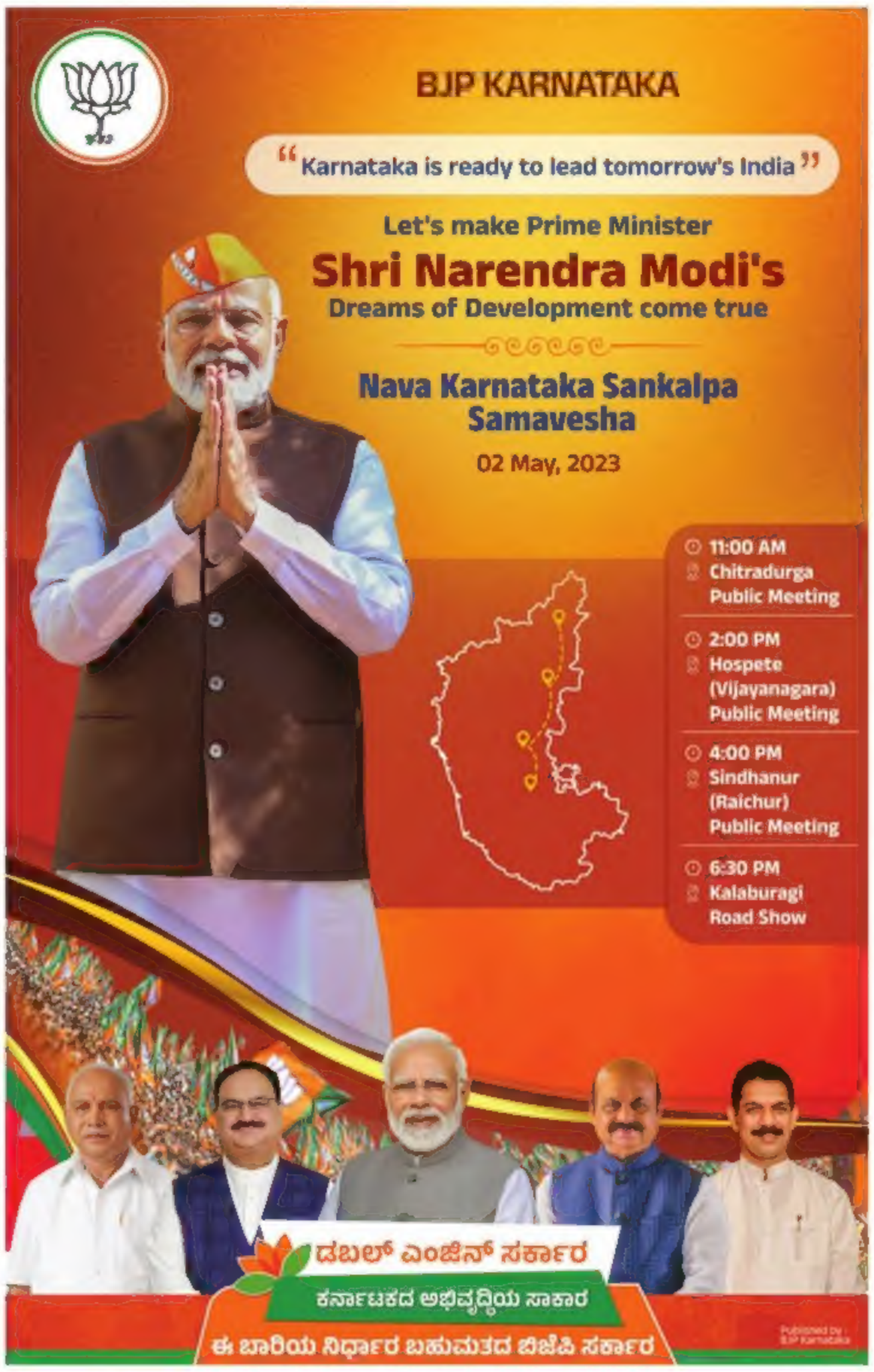
EXPRESS READ

Priyank's 'nalayak' jibe against PM

KALABURAGI: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's son and state party leader Priyank Kharge on Monday dubbed Prime Minister Narendra Modi a 'nalayak' drawing the ire of BJP brass, while the Grand Old Party asserted that such a remark was never made by him | P4

RCB win low-scoring thriller vs LSG

LUCKNOW: Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Lucknow Super Giants by 18 runs in a low-scoring Indian Premier League game here on Monday. Put into bat first, RCB scored a below-par 126. Chasing, LSG lost quick wickets and fell short of the target as skipper KL Rahul was injured | P11



SCORCHING SUMMER

Dam! Water level dropping fast in state

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

THE water level in the reservoirs across the state is dipping fast because of poor pre-monsoon showers and scorching summer.

According to a report from the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC), as on April 29, the average water level in 13 reservoirs was 27%.

As against the normal pre-monsoon showers of 129 mm (from January 1 - May 31, 2023), the state received 39.7 mm.

Also, the state received 40 mm rain as against the normal of 48 mm from January 1 - May 1, 2023.

The present storage at the Tungabhadra reservoir is 3%. The reservoir has 2.81 tmcft of water as against its gross storage capacity of 105.79 tmcft. The storage during the same period last year was 8.87 tmcft.

The present storage at Varahi is 13%. The reservoir has 4.08 tmcft as against its gross storage capacity of 31.10 tmcft. The storage at Supa is 21%, Harangi 32%, Almatti 22% and Ghataprabha 20%.

According to the report, hydropower generation capacity of the state's reservoirs at the moment is 28%.

CONTINUED ON: P5

Discussions on the strategies to be adopted to boost the water level in the reservoirs are on

Official, Karnataka Minor Irrigation Dept